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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a unit for government and economics and one for world history on the dramatic regional changes which have occurred in Central and Eastern Europe since the late 1980s. The units can be taught cohesively covering 2-3 weeks or as modules integrated into relevant themes in the curriculum. The "case studies" approach allows students to analyze and compare the struggles facing the nations. The government and economics lesson contains modules on: (1) "Comparative Systems"; (2) "Emerging Democracies"; (3) "Cultural Aspects"; (4) "Immigration"; (5) "Role of International Organizations"; and (6) "Social Justice." Portfolio assignments are used for evaluation of the units. World history modules include: (1) "Roman Empire"; (2) "Byzantine Empire"; (3) "Scientific Revolution"; (4) "World War I"; and (5) "World War II." (EH)

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ED 410 162

BULGARIA, ROMANIA, AND POLAND:

CASE STUDIES OF A CHANGING REGION

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SO 027 937

Nancy Mallory-Boyle
Fulbright Summer
Seminar, 1996
Romania/Bulgaria

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UNIT STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

BULGARIA ROMANIA POLAND

STRATEGIES* PERFORMANCE*

Main concepts:
1. Change
2. Interdependence

KNOWLEDGE* ATTITUDES* SKILLS*

STRATEGIES
slides, pictures, videotapes, maps, current statistical government information, literature, student-written culturgrams and dialogues, guest speakers, quizzes, tests, portfolios, role plays

PERFORMANCE
pre-tests, group activities in class, portfolio, which would be assessed using a rubric

KNOWLEDGE
Students will:
1. Locate the countries of Eastern Europe on a map.
2. Recognize the historical impact of the Soviet Union on Eastern block countries.
3. Identify, describe, and explain the importance of current efforts at reform.
4. Compare the economic and political systems of the U.S. and these 3 countries.
5. Apply their understanding of the European community and other international organizations to these countries' current situations.
6. Recognize distinctive cultural features of these countries by experiencing some of their art, music, and literature.

ATTITUDES
Students will:
1. Understand the need for empathy for the special challenges these nations face as they make their transition to democracy.
2. Develop a sense of what life is like in one of these countries as a teenager.
3. Appreciate their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.
4. Recognize the presence and impact of historic and current immigrants from this region in the United States.

SKILLS

Students will:

1. Develop map skills.
2. Develop creative writing skills based on content.
3. Develop group cooperation skills.
4. Develop research skills.

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

As I begin this unit, I will give the students a survey that will focus both on their knowledge about the area's history and culture as well as their attitudes about the area. We will discuss the surveys, and I will keep them to share with them at the end of the unit.

I will also give them a map pre-test.

POST-ASSESSMENT:

To evaluate the students' learning, I will give a written test or quiz, a group project, and several individual assignments. The portfolio assessment in government is comprised of a series of newspaper articles with analysis, and the portfolio in world history is a travel scrapbook.

I would use traditional evaluation of the test and the assignments and rubrics for the portfolio and the group project.

RATIONALE:

This unit plan enables students to study three countries--Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland--as case studies of the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Although each country is distinct, all are in transition and therefore exemplify the dynamic regional changes occurring since the late 1980s.

This unit plan is designed to be taught in either 1 of 2 ways. It can either be approached as a cohesive unit lasting approximately 2-3 weeks, or it can be taught as a series of modules that are integrated into relevant themes in the existing curriculum. These modules can be used in any order depending on the concepts that the particular teacher is focusing on in the given time. They should be used when relevant to the broader curriculum as case studies and not as discrete units that lack relevance or genuine application. Greater emphasis has been placed on the government and economics unit. Although the lessons are designed for 2 high school courses--government and economics and world history--the lessons could be adapted for middle school use as well.

In the **government and economics** modules, an attempt has been made to accomplish two goals. First, by comparing communist theory and communism in practice, the students will gain understanding. Secondly, students should recognize the special challenges the people of these countries face as they try to complete the transition from a communist state and command economic system to a democratic state and a free market structure. Students need a

basic understanding of the history and culture of the region in order to analyze political and economic characteristics. It is only in recognizing the context of culture and its interplay with political and economic systems that students may fully understand this area.

In the **world history** modules, I have tried to make the course more current by inserting a picture of the area today--a scene of dynamic change and connection. The point that I make with the students is that without looking at the rich history of the region over time, we cannot understand the present events and conflicts. Special attention is given to helping the students recognize the power and passion around the issue of ethnic identity in the region, which seems almost foreign to our values as Americans. These modules are organized around chronological themes because I teach this course in time sequence.

This unit plan reflects my desire to make both of these courses increasingly relevant, both because of a sense of social justice and awareness that has demanded my attention, but also because my students learn better when they can answer the question "So what?". This framework for curriculum application and the teaching methods provided could be used for any region of the world, and I look to developing several more units like this in the future.

TEACHING METHODS USED:

1. pictures and slide show of these countries
2. food---world history
3. videotapes
4. maps/map quiz
5. literature/poetry
6. reading culturgrams/student-developed culturgrams
7. student-written dialogues about current change there
8. timeline--world history
9. guest speakers--both Americans and Eastern Europeans
10. email or traditional pen pals
11. social justice project: support for orphanages of Romania or a book drive
12. individual portfolio project: article assignment or travel scrapbook

GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMICS MODULES

In order to use these modules, first decide what order best suits your curriculum and then decide whether to teach the lessons as modules or as a continuous unit. Individual flexibility is built into the lessons.

THEMES FOR EMPHASIS: Immigration, Comparative Systems (economic and governmental), Emerging Democracies, Role of International Organizations, Cultural Aspects, Social Justice.

Lesson One: The first lesson, regardless of which module is used first, would contain these initial activities.

* Eastern Europe survey. Give the students a survey about general culture and history; then discuss the results, focusing on their notions about what the region is like.
* Map pretest. After the students take the pretest, "grade" map together and discuss geographical features of the region. Emphasize Balkan region as a crossroads between Europe and Asia.
* Brainstorming activity. Students identify things they associate with Eastern and Central Europe. This helps the teacher understand the students' knowledge as they begin the unit.

MODULE 1: COMPARATIVE SYSTEMS

Curricular Link:

* After learning about comparative economic and government systems in this course, students look at Eastern Europe as a case study of transition between systems.

Activities:

* Basis of communist theory and readings about Marx.
  1. Excerpts from Communist Manifesto.
  2. Excerpt from Marx for Beginners. Students act out part of this reading.

* Comparative reading assignment. After a basic introduction to Marx's theories, students will be assigned to one of three groups and will read about socialism, communism, and capitalism. Each group will then share its conclusions with the class about the advantages and disadvantages of the theoretical system.

* Comparative chart of the different systems of government and economic structure. Discussion about the difference between theory and reality.

* Simulation or role play about what it is like to live in each of the systems.

MODULE 2: EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

Curricular Link:

* As students examine government systems within a context, they will see that as countries change from one form of government to another, special challenges develop. Reminding students about the United States' transition after the Revolution in the 18th century may be helpful.

* Nature of coalition governments and special interest politics.

* Multi-party systems and their growth in Europe since the end of the Cold War.

Activities:

* Students read current news articles having to do with government development and reform in these countries. This can be done either as an independent assignment or within the portfolio structure. (see portfolio assignment)

* Comparative constitutions assignment.
Students divide into groups to examine excerpts of each of the three constitutions. As students report, they not only compare the constitutions within the region, they also compare the United States Constitution with their particular constitution.

* Students look at a reading about multi-party systems and compare the two-party and multi-party systems. Discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of coalition politics in this region.

* Depending on time, the students could divide into 6-9 groups to examine current issues in each of these countries. The students could complete background research about the country and then follow current events in the country for a particular period. This could also be the basis for the portfolio or be used as an introductory activity.

MODULE 3: CULTURAL ASPECTS

Curricular Link:

* While cultural features are a less prominent focus of a government class than a history class, I firmly believe that students must learn about the systems of countries within a context. Without this context, students cannot appreciate the differences between the United States and Eastern Europe.

* Emphasis on diversity of this region and of immigrants from this region to the U.S.

* Special role of the Jewish culture in this region following WWII.

* Role of religion in each nation.

* Power of symbolism in human culture.

* Art as a way to understand a people or a time period.

Activities:

* Culturgrams/student-written culturgrams.

* Students would experience examples of literature, food,

music, and art from this region.

* Teacher-developed slide show and picture sharing session from my trips.

* Teacher sharing of cultural artifacts and meaningful symbols from my trips. For instance, I would talk about symbols like the hammer and sickle in Bulgaria and the hole in the flag in Romania. In order to help them understand the role of a powerfully oppressive symbol such as the hammer and sickle, the teacher can help the students develop a list of historically meaningful positive and negative symbols. (ex. swastika, cross, star of David, burning cross, illuminated candles, etc.) Then, it might be helpful to discuss what symbols people from other countries would associate with the United States.

* Students read poems written by students in Bulgaria and write poems about the region in response to these poems. This issue of change is another general related theme.

MODULE 4: IMMIGRATION

Curricular Link:

* This is a perfect opportunity to look at historical U.S. immigration and discrimination issues. Students could also learn about the current dispersion of the people of this area, particularly the movement of gypsies to other countries within the region. One critical goal that I have in my teaching is for students to recognize the hypocrisy of honoring 19th and 20th century immigrants and shunning present-day immigrants.

Activities:

* Use of government documents for research about immigration and its impact on people. (See Country Reports on human rights and refugees.)

* Brief focus on the history of immigrants to the United States from this region and the use of thematic maps and/or statistical tables.

* Discuss the present-day concern of a "brain drain" problem in these countries as economic conditions worsen.

* Literature. The focus here, obviously, are pieces written by U.S. immigrants or citizens who are from these countries. One possible source is American Mosaic, compiled by Joan Morrison and Charlotte Fox Zabusky, which contains short narratives about immigrant experiences in their own words.

* Students could do research on their own family's arrival in the U.S. and then write about family stories.

* Guest speakers--perhaps recent immigrants.

MODULE 5: ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Curricular Link:

* After an introduction of the characteristics and problems of international organizations, students can look at the possible inclusion of Eastern European countries in these groups. Students should compare the relative position of each of these 3 countries in terms of achieving entrée into organizations such as the United Nations and the European Community.

Activities:

* Reading about the European Community.

* Discussion about the changing nature of international organizations after the end of the Cold War.

* Group project--students write position papers about whether or not these countries should be included in these organizations. Pro v. con. Follow-up debate.

* Simulation--students can portray roles of representatives of these countries who are applying for membership, say perhaps into the European Community. Students must make a decision about entry based on a set of criteria.

* Depending on the results of student research, letters to international organizations about the status of these countries might be a good extension activity.

MODULE 6: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Curricular Link:

One cost of the upheaval of the revolution in Romania in 1989 is the toll it has taken on the children there. Not only were many children made orphans by the deaths of the revolution, but some parents today give their children away because of the terrible economic conditions. Students should address the personal and societal implications of this problem.

One focus of this module is the question "To what extent do we have a human responsibility to help needy people in other countries?" A tendency I see in many of my students is for them to focus inwardly and avoid the suffering of people in different countries. I want to challenge this notion.

Activities:

* Project: A fund-raising and letter-writing effort for an orphanage in Sibiu, Romania, that could possibly spread to other orphanages. Depending on language differences, U.S. students could write to Romanian children as pen pals. Members of the summer seminar are organizing a book drive

for Bulgaria and Romania, and students could help coordinate this project.

* Students could also help out at a local orphanage or youth facility in the United States.

* Controversial issue topic, for debate or reaction paper: "Should impoverished children from foreign countries be adopted by U.S. citizens?"

* A look at social justice issues within Eastern Europe--the special plight of gypsies.

GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMICS PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT

Students in the government and economics class would complete a portfolio based on the following parameters:

1. Choose a pertinent, current issue related to Central and Eastern Europe. Some examples include efforts at democratic reform, inflation, unemployment and poverty, post-communist government involvement, environmental destruction, and involvement with international organizations. Any country in the region may be studied.
2. Research about your topic in the news media and in our email connection with students in some of these countries. Use at least 5 sources for your research. Clip the articles that you read to include in the portfolio.
3. Write a short paper (3-4 pages) in which you detail the issue you studied, what is needed to address the issue, and your opinion about how the issue should be addressed.
4. If you are able to do an email dialogue, print out a sample of one of your conversations and include a section in your paper in which you discuss the impact this email pal had on your perspective of the country.

WORLD HISTORY MODULES

The world history unit is briefer than the previous one. I am still developing these ideas, and they are my secondary focus as I integrate my travel experience into my curriculum. I have developed the world history lessons based on chronological intersections with the curriculum. The themes mentioned below are intertwined in the lessons.

THEMES FOR EMPHASIS: Oppression and History, Role of International Organizations, Cultural Aspects, Diversity in Eastern Europe, Social Justice.

HISTORICAL ERAS TO EMPHASIZE: Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Scientific Revolution, WWI, WWII.

Lesson One: The first lesson, regardless of which module is used first, would contain these initial activities.

* Eastern Europe survey. Students take the survey and then discuss. This connects with the brainstorming activity, in which students focus on two tasks. Students identify the links between the world history curriculum and Central and Eastern Europe. Then, they should identify things that they know about this region.

* Map pretest. Students "grade" map together and discuss geographical features of the region. Emphasize Balkan region as a crossroads between Europe and Asia.

* Major events timeline for review.

ROMAN EMPIRE: MODULE 1

* Discuss effect of the Roman empire on this region.

* Again, emphasize that this area, especially the Balkans, is a crossroads between Europe and Asia.

* Students look at slides/pictures from my trip of Roman ruins in Romania and Bulgaria.

* Language activity. Students could learn several words in Romanian and talk about how Romanians look to Rome as their ancestors in language, architecture, and other cultural elements. Perhaps a guest speaker from the local university could do this.

* Role play activity. Students research famous Roman people and then act as them in a role play activity. People from Eastern Europe could also be included.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE: MODULE 2

* Role of art--focus on iconography and its religious and artistic meaning. Use of books, slides, pictures, and actual icons.

* Iconoclasm dispute: The power of symbols in history.

* Discuss impact of Christianity on this area due to Constantine's leadership. Examine the consequent growth of power of the Orthodox Church. Current religious characteristics of these countries can be traced back to the time of the Byzantine empire.

* Distinct architecture of this area could be looked at with pictures/slides of domes.

* Students could compare the average day or lifestyle of a

person living here to a person living in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. They could do this through a dialogue, a role play, or a letter writing activity.

* Students could research about Cyril and Methodius, founders of the Cyrillic alphabet and learn how Bulgarians honor them today. They could also learn the alphabet. This could be a leadership opportunity for some of my Russian students.

* Talk about the importance of language in the acculturation process. For example, what special challenges would an immigrant have if he or she moved to a country with a different alphabet?

SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION: MODULE 3

Throughout the year, I do several lessons that focus on the issue of various types of leadership. This lesson is a corollary to my lessons on Socrates and Galileo.

* A leadership lesson focused around the concept of Copernicus as an intellectual leader.

* Students will read about Copernicus, either through an excerpt from a secondary source or through a teacher-written play.

* Discussion about the impact of the church in this period of history on science and individual thought. Comparison with the other leaders we talk about during the year.

* Discussion starter or essay topic: Ask students if they have ever been asked to recant one of their significant beliefs. Talk about what they did and why.

* Students could do individual research and write resumes or essays about other Eastern/Central European scientists.

WORLD WAR I: MODULE 4

* Address concern of why this area became the crux of the First World War by discussing the critical role of national ethnic identity in this region. Try to have the students understand and appreciate the perspective of these peoples. This might be done effectively through a role play based on readings.

* Lesson about the First and Second Balkan Wars and their relationship to WWI.

* Study the effect of the war on these regions, in particular, the fact that the war did not eradicate or "solve" the question of ethnic identity--the conflict between nation and state continued.

* Formation of Poland--again.

* Use of maps.

* Videotapes, such as The Guns of August, which focuses on the importance of nationalism as an issue.

WORLD WAR II: MODULE 5

* Focus on the invasion of Poland as a catalyst for the beginning of the war.

* Discuss the conflict between national identity of groups of people and the alliances formed among states.

* Effects of the war on these nations.

* Particular issue of the Holocaust and the case of Jews in Eastern Europe after the war.

* Use of slides and pictures from Auschwitz.

* Focus on literature written about the Holocaust.

* Show Schindler's List and read an excerpt from the book.

* Guest speakers, such as survivors of the Holocaust.

* Share personal experiences from Poland through teacher-written poetry.

WORLD HISTORY PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT

Students will develop a portfolio based on the following criteria:

1. Choose a country in Central and Eastern Europe that interests you.
2. Research about your country using at least 5 sources of 2 different types of media.
3. Compile a travel scrapbook about either
   a. The history of the country,
      OR
   b. Current events and culture of the country.
4. Pretend that you are hosting me on an actual journey to this country. Be sure to include each of the following items in your scrapbook:
   a. Map with itinerary listed and highlighted.
   b. Introduction to the purpose of the trip and what I will see.
   c. Timeline of 10-12 key events of the country's history.
   d. Main section with word-processed text and pictures (drawn and/or clipped) about the journey. Be creative.
5. For the history option projects, divide your portfolio by eras and highlight major events, noting key characters and

effects of major events.

6. For the culture option projects, divide your portfolio based on several distinctive features of the country's culture--art, music, literature, famous people, sport, entertainment, religion, clothing, customs, dance, and folk music.
7. Write a 2-4 page summary paper in which you detail specific aspects of the country that you learned to appreciate more fully. How are you different as a person as a result of doing this project?